



“The union taught me how to fight for what I needed and what I had, and if it was something I wanted, how to go after it.”

— Culinary Workers Union leader

Hattie Canty

4 Fast Facts about Women and Unions

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Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor

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Protecting the interests of working women and advocating for their equality and economic security.

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The union advantage for all workers is clear. Union membership translates into more money in workers' bank accounts, better access to health insurance, more job-protected time off for workers to care for themselves or their families when they're sick, and the power to organize for safer working conditions. For women in particular, there are strong advantages to union membership.

Union women make more money

Women who are union members make an average of \$191 more per week, or nearly \$10,000 per year, than their non-union counterparts. The union difference is especially stark for Latina union members, who make an average of \$265 more per week, or \$13,780 per year, than Latina workers who are not in a union.

The union advantage is especially strong in certain female-dominated occupations

Women comprise the vast majority of workers in personal care and service occupations – for example, child care workers, manicurists and shampooers at hair salons – all occupations that historically have been associated with poor working conditions and wages, with few options for redress. In these occupations the union advantage is particularly clear: Unionized women make \$230 more weekly than nonunion women. In another female-dominated occupation, teaching, union members earn 27% more than their non-union counterparts, which translates to a weekly wage advantage of \$291.

Union women have better benefits

Nearly all (95%) union workers have access to medical care benefits, compared to only 71% of nonunion workers. In addition, nearly all union workers (95%) have access to retirement benefits, compared 70% of nonunion workers. Union workers are also more



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Unions can help make workplaces safer, including by protecting workers from gender-based violence and harassment. In Chicago, hotel workers and their union, UNITE HERE, pushed for legislation that mandates panic buttons for hotel housekeepers. As a result, multiple cities and states have passed similar laws. Other unions have demanded provisions relating to sexual harassment and assault in their contracts. And the AFL-CIO has passed a resolution to promote gender equity and take on gender-based violence and harassment in the workplace.

No matter how you slice it, women benefit from union membership. Are you a union member? In the comments, let us know what the “union advantage” means to you.

Not a union member but interested in organizing your workplace? The Department of Labor has resources at www.workcenter.gov.



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